A Woman's Work Among Red Men

ONE of the bravest and best workers for the civilizing of the Indians on the reservations is a white woman. Her name is Estelle Reel, she hails from Wyoming and she holds the important position of superintendent of Indian schools for the United States.

Miss Reel is a young woman of attractive personality and great courage. She travels alone among the Indians in the remotest and wildest parts of the country. The fiercest-looking has no power to frighten her, and her dauntless pluck has naturally won the Indians' respect and esteem as nothing else would have done.

The young superintendent is performing her work in a manner which reflects credit on womanhood. As a result, a marked improvement is noticeable in the education of the Indians all over the country. Each year Miss Reel travels from coast to coast to study the various needs of the reservation schools and compare their results with other schools in more settled districts. During her first year of office she traveled seven months, becoming acquainted with the various tribes and the methods used in civilizing them. Much of the distance was covered by stage and wagon. It is largely due to her personal observation that the schools show greater efficiency than at any other time during their history.

Congress has a faculty of appropriating money for Indian schools without a definite idea of where they are to be located. The congressman in Washington knows little or nothing of the wilds of Arizona. Another reason for the inaccessibility of the schools is that they are frequently established near reservations for which the Indians purposely chose remote locations. Miss Reel often travels through parts of the country where there is not even a wagon road.

Her most perilous journey is up the Colorado river. She is obliged to board a barge and take a two days' journey on the river, accompanied only by two Indians. Teachers who have come a long distance from the east protest that they cannot go on when they get this far, but Miss Reel is confident the Indians are her friends and never feels the slightest fear of them.

Isolation from railroads makes Miss Reel's visit an event in any Indian school, especially as she carries with her a whole pharmacopia of medicine. This is intended for the teachers and scholars, to whom she is doctor and nurse.

MISS ESTELLE REEL OF WYOMING, SUPERINTENDENT OF INDIAN SCHOOL.

and crying while her lord and master, a

Many features of Indian life seem pathetic to Miss Reel—the hard work the squaws are obliged to do, and the way in which they stand waiting until their braves have eaten their fill.

"Once," said Miss Reel, "I saw a poor squaw with a baby in her arms, looking on tall, fine looking brave, devoured every particle of food. I had no interpreter, but feeling it was because she was hungry, I sent her next day some presents which would please her."

The children who attend the Indian schools are gradually learning civilized ways. They cook their food differently from their parents and are cleanly in eating.

In spite of popular opinion to the contrary, Miss Reel contends that contagious diseases spread rapidly among the red men. "At one reservation which I visited," she says, "I asked to see the chief braves. After being kept a long time I was informed the delay in appearing was due to their making their toilets. On their appearing in state later I saw that their usual queer appearance was enhanced by the application of red paint, put on to conceal pock marks."

One of the aims of Miss Reel and others interested in similar work is to bring the handicrafts of the Indian to the front. This is already being done. In a personal investigation which she has made of the sales of three of the principal stores that handle curios in New York, she found that at present more Indian goods are sold than Oriental; rich families like the Vanderbilts frequently buying $1,000 worth at a time to decorate an Indian room. The time for getting these curios cheaply is rapidly passing, for the Indian is learning that good prices can be obtained, just as he is learning the secrets of aniline dyes and ordinary Germantown wool for rugs, instead of vegetable dyes. Miss Reel regrets this and urges that the Indians be taught to do their original work and not imitations.

"Not long ago," said Miss Reel when discussing this subject, "I saw an old squaw working on a basket. She took a bottle of red ink and began painting it. I immediately went to her, told her it would not do, and took the ink away. Then I turned and bought from her an old basket that I knew had been made of native grasses and stained with vegetable dyes, in order to show her that we really wanted work done in the old manner."

As a preliminary step toward solving this problem Miss Reel has issued a circular to the Indian schools asking for the names of basket makers who will teach the children original Indian handicraft and designs which symbolize the history of the tribes. She wishes to arouse the pride of the Indians and make them feel that the work of their ancestors must not be allowed to die out. This will not interfere with the present aim of the Indian schools to make young Indians practical citizens. All kinds of industrial work are taught in these schools, including blacksmithing, carpentry and sewing.

Lived in the Hidden and Forbidden City of Lhassa

THE Russian explorer Zybikoff has just returned from Thibet, where he resided for a year in the capital, Lhassa. He delivered a lecture before the Russian Imperial Geographical society in St. Petersburg. Zybikoff is really a Buriat and Buddhist in language and religion, and can scarcely be distinguished from the Thibetans themselves. He penetrated Thibet as a lama with a caravan of pilgrims who were going to pay veneration to the Dalai, or Great Ocean lama, the pope of the Buddhist world. In his lecture he said that the estimate of the population of Thibet is undoubtedly exaggerated. In Thibet proper there are not more than a million people, and the population is decreasing, owing to the ravages of smallpox and the large number of priests who are pledged to celibacy. The Chinese inhabitants are almost all merchants. The soldiers only remain a few years and are then relieved. During their stay they take native girls as concubines. Male children are considered as Chinese and female children as Thibetans.

Many skillful workmen from Nepaul are employed as sculptors and jewellers in the temples. Almost the whole of central Thibet belongs to the Dalai lama, who is extending his proprietorship more and more every day. Thibetan cooking is not very appetizing. The principal dishes are uncooked meats, curded milk, vegetables, butter, soups made of barley meal and pounded bones. A spirit extracted from wheat costs less than half a penny a pint.

The morality among the Thibetans is low, and polyandry and polygamy flourish. The people spend their money lavishly on fine clothes. The wealthy residents resemble walking jewellers' shops. Labor is paid a little more than a penny a day. A priest will say his best prayers a whole day in your behalf for sixpence.

The population of Lhassa is 10,000, but pilgrims, merchants and workers are constantly passing through the town, which has a circumference of about seven miles. In the center stands a celebrated temple containing a gigantic bronze statue of Buddha, with a gold crown decorated with precious stones. Round the statue lamps fed with melted butter are always burning. Near the temple is a large courtyard, in which thousands of lamas assemble twice a year to pray for the Dalai lama and the emperor of China.

The Dalai's palace is on a hill three-quarters of a mile from Lhassa. Close by are the treasury, the high school of theology and medicine and the residence of 1,200 court functionaries and 500 monks. The state prison officials are corrupt to the last degree. The army is worthless and is armed with old-fashioned muskets and bows and arrows.—New York Sun.

CLASS OF 1903 OF THE [illegible] SCHOOL AT SCHUYLER, Neb.